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### **Utton Center Scientific and Technical Report**

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#### **Background**

The Utton Transboundary Resources Center was named to receive a Congressionally directed grant in the FY2000 Department of Energy Budget. The allocation was to support the Utton Center's work on preventing and managing transboundary water conflicts. Before embarking on any major project the Utton Center spent time analyzing the current state of affairs in terms of transboundary water issues. Then, with an advisory group composed of nationally-recognized experts, many of whom had worked with the late Professor Albert E. Utton, produced a White Paper. This document outlined many of the areas that could be the focus of the Utton Center's work and has served to guide its operation since it was prepared. It can be found on the Utton Center's website at <http://uttoncenter/projects.html>

The Utton Center promotes equitable and sustainable management and utilization of transboundary resources through impartial expertise, multi-disciplinary scholarship, and preventive diplomacy. Work is carried out with existing institutions, states and nations to structure development of common data which can be used in the development of compacts, treaties and other agreements related to natural resources management, including water.

The Utton Center operates with a small staff of four persons, and contracts out work to appropriate experts when needed. This method of handling our work has allowed us the flexibility to pursue issues of importance as they arise and address them with the best thinking available. This is exemplified by the model interstate water compact that is just being completed.

#### **Conferences**

A series of conferences that brought together experts from different disciplines and from different user groups began the careful crafting of model agreements and collaborative efforts to foster a shared understanding of the resource and each stakeholder's interests and role in management. Having an understanding of the science that is relevant to the resource is critical to effective water and resource management. Similarly, an understanding of the differing values that user groups have in water is critical in addressing long-term concerns. The Utton Center's research team includes lawyers, hydrologists, geologists, engineers, municipal and state managers, tribal representatives, social scientists and more. Diversity of background and interest is assured through invitations to all critical experts and users. The conferences have been met with accolades from virtually all participants. They emphasized the need to

include input from these various sources when developing policies and agreements that would have wide-ranging application. The conferences were regarded as an important step in efforts to reduce litigation in inter-jurisdictional disputes and promote conservation and efficient use of water resources.

- Interstate Waters: Crossing Boundaries for Sustainable Solutions DOE/ER/63052-02
- Transboundary Waters: Crossing Cultural Boundaries for Sustainable Solutions DOE/ER/63052-03

### Model Compact

The need for a model interstate water compact was determined early in the life of the grant. One of the country's pre-eminent interstate water compact lawyers was contracted for the work. In conjunction with the Utton Center he identified an advisory group from around the country and they contributed to the final document. This model compact can be used as the basis for negotiating new compacts or renegotiating existing ones. Working under the premise that agreements must be based on an agreed-upon set of data, and that input from a number of disciplines is vital to that data, this project brings together the information and understanding that came from the two major conferences organized by the Utton Center. Detailed proceedings of the conferences have been submitted as part of this report, together with a draft of the model interstate water compact and commentaries.

- Model Water Compact and Commentaries DOE/ER/63052-04

### Other Projects

The Utton Center worked with Sandia National Lab and the Rio Grande Water Assembly in a facilitator role in the development of a hydrologic model for the region. This project grew out of a state-mandated regional water planning process. The Water Assembly was comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders who came to the project with a variety of views of planning and water modeling. At the end of the project it was acknowledged that without the role of the Utton Center the project would not have succeeded in the goal of having public/lay people provide key hydrologic inputs and understand hydrologic systems and how a model can demonstrate effects of water use and/or shortage on other parts of the system. In the role of impartial facilitator, and also providing some administrative support, the Utton Center kept the project on track. A group that was divided at the outset eventually came to understand the need to work together. This type of a modeling facilitation project could serve as a community education and decision support project anywhere in the country.

Two workshops on Rio Grande bosque landscape alteration were hosted by the Utton Center at the request of two eminent biologists representing different views and constituencies. This effort once again brought together scientists, managers, advocates and citizens to develop a plan to manage the bosque in the Albuquerque area to diminish fire hazard and conserve water. The resulting strategy was published in June 2005. The State of New Mexico provided additional financial support to this effort.

The Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative is a continuing project whose purpose is to develop hydrologic modeling for use in meeting federal ESA legislation. The Utton Center represents the University of New Mexico on the Water and Acquisitions Management Subcommittee which is composed of federal, state, tribal and other interests. They are addressing water supply, science and habitat restoration

in the Middle Rio Grande, seeking to speed the recovery of endangered species while not impairing water rights and abuse.

A Reservoir Storage Modeling project with the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative failed to reach consensus. The attempt was to use the URGWOM model developed by Sandia National Labs to create reservoir storage scenarios. Even though agreement to proceed did not occur at the time, the Utton Center report will be a useful tool as the issue is revisited as part of long-term planning by the state.

A number of smaller workshops and seminars were held over the period the contract. Each was designed to educate a particular community about the issues we are all facing. They were both open to the public as well as directed at specific communities and were well received.

At the start of this contract the Utton Center was publishing newsletters which were distributed worldwide. However, after the Spring 2005 edition we discontinued paper publication of the newsletter, instead publishing updates in the UNM School of Law publication and using our newly developed website as the access point for information on our work. Development of the website is an ongoing process, and, using funds from other sources, we are developing a data base through the UNM library system focused on water and energy issues to be accessed through the website. We direct you to that website for the materials and reports generated by the Utton Center since 2001.

[http://uttoncenter.unm.edu/about\\_the\\_center.html](http://uttoncenter.unm.edu/about_the_center.html).

It can be seen from this brief overview of the Utton Center's work for the past five years that we strive to maintain the highest levels of quality, impartiality and inclusiveness in research, drafting documents of agreement and education, all with a strong foundation of multidisciplinary scientific expertise. We have been able to build on this initial funding by acquiring additional funds from federal, state and private entities.